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ABSTRACT

A district-based leadership program has been designed to train teachers in self-assessment so they may independently improve their instructional skills. Teachers are trained to analyze their behaviors objectively through the use of audio and videotape. Instruction is also provided in creating and using checklists to assess classroom instruction via audiotape and/or videotape playback, and in strategies for dealing with input from students relating to teacher instructional performance. The district-based leadership hierarchy, which sustains this type of staff development program, is divided into five levels: (1) superintendent; (2) staff development director; (3) staff development steering committee; (4) building-level administrators/partner-teachers/demonstration teachers/consultants; and (5) classroom teachers. The functions and responsibilities of individuals at each level of the leadership hierarchy are discussed in this paper. (JD)

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IMPLEMENTING A SELF-DIRECTED STAFF DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM WITH A DISTRICT-BASED LEADERSHIP MODEL

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Curriculum development and staff development continue to receive renewed attention in the 1980s. The effective school literature research has placed heavy emphasis on curriculum and professional development. As a consequence, school districts are exploring new and unique approaches to age-old problems. One of the freshest staff development approaches being implemented is teacher self-assessment or self-directed staff development. This kind of staff development program is unique because it stresses that teachers can engage in instructional improvement activities without being totally dependent on administrators or supervisors. Equally important, the program emphasizes that evaluation need not be the vehicle to achieve improvement of instruction. Recent research has documented that teachers can successfully engage in self-directed staff development activities if they are given comprehensive training.¹ Specifically, teacher self-assessment or self-directed staff development is a program involving interlocking strategies which lead teachers to engage in self-examination which results in self-improvement.² One of the major shortcomings often cited in self-directed staff development programs is the seeming lack of structure which sustains the direction and energy of teachers over a long period of time. In short, teachers need some sort of assistance to guide them as they become skilled in self-directed staff development practices. Common questions posed by those school districts interested in implementing self-directed staff development programs include the following: (1) If teachers are self-directed, to whom are they ultimately

¹Abari, Ahmad, The Effect of Teacher Self-Assessment Training on In-Service Teachers. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, 1983.

²Bailey, Gerald D. Teacher Self-Assessment: A Means for Improving Instruction, NEA, Washington, D.C., 1981.

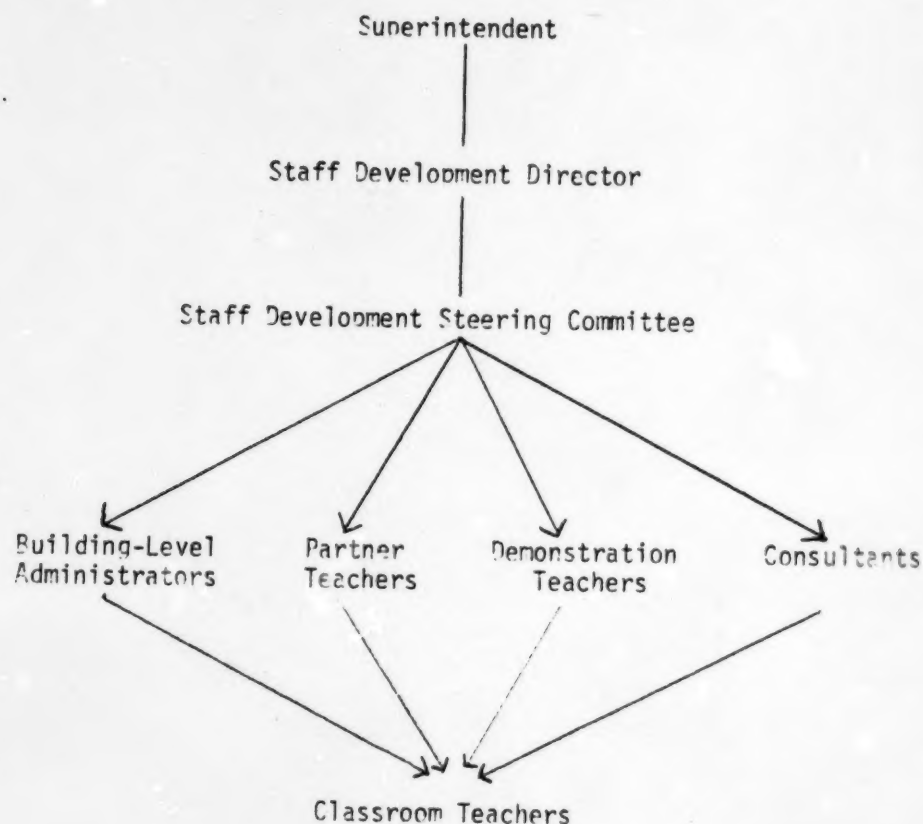
accountable? (2) Who provides training for the teacher during the program? and (3) Who assists the teacher in the various steps found in the program?

Any staff development program that is to be effective must be governed by a leadership structure. The district-based leadership model described in this paper deals with how a self-directed staff development program can be governed and sustained over a period of time. To understand the district-based leadership model, it is critical to comprehend the concept of teacher self-assessment or self-directed staff development. The program involves a series complementary steps which teachers must master before engaging in self-directed self-improvement. The in-depth training allows teachers to learn how to monitor their own instructional improvement activities. The teacher self-assessment steps include:

1. Orientation to Teacher Self-Assessment
(Making faculty aware of the multifaceted nature of self-examination and the overall philosophy of self-help.)
2. Media
(Aquainting faculty with how to approach self-examination through objective measures such as audiotape and videotape playback.)
3. Set and Closure
(Introducing faculty to basic skills found in classroom instruction which can be analyzed via audiotape and videotape playback.)
4. Verbal Cues
(Familiarizing faculty to essential verbal behaviors which can be analyzed via audiotape and/or videotape playback.)
5. Nonverbal Cues
(Familiarizing faculty with essential nonverbal behaviors which can be analyzed via audiotape and/or videotape playback.)
6. Means-Referenced Objectives
(Instructing faculty how to plan and evaluate methodology behaviors.)
7. Observation Forms
(Teaching faculty how to create and use checklists to assess classroom instruction via audiotape and/or videotape playback.)

8. Student Feedback
(Familiarizing faculty with strategies dealing with input from students relating to teacher instructional performance.)
9. Mental Rehearsal
(Instructing faculty how to produce mental imagery as a method of preparation.)

Each of the steps allows teachers to gain skills in looking at themselves in a highly objective fashion. The total process permits teachers to determine strengths and weaknesses by self-examination. As a consequence, a strong leadership structure needs to be implemented which will sustain this type of staff development program. The District-Based Staff Development Leadership Hierarchy model is illustrated in Figure 1.



DISTRICT-BASED STAFF DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP HIERARCHY

Figure 1

The District-Based Staff Development Leadership Hierarchy illustrates (1) who is directly and indirectly involved in staff development and (2) the lines of responsibility between and among those people involved. The unique structure of the model suggests that teachers can be successful in engaging in teacher self-assessment when a strong, well defined leadership structure undergirds the program. The model is divided into five levels. Each person or persons represented at each level has a different function and set of responsibilities which govern the program of teacher self-assessment. The levels include: (1) superintendent, (2) staff development director, (3) staff development steering committee, (4) building-level administrators/partner teachers/demonstration teachers/consultants and (5) classroom teachers.

Level One: Superintendent

Ultimately, the responsibility for initiating and monitoring the staff development program belongs to the superintendent. This individual must be committed to the goal of instructional improvement and have developed an overall plan of how to sustain the program financially.

In rural and small schools, the superintendent must assume the responsibility for directing the staff development program. He/she will become the staff development director. As leader of the school, the superintendent must wear several hats. Equally important, the superintendent must provide emotional support for faculty involved in the staff development program. This investment of confidence in people is essential to the success of staff development. This will need to be accomplished by both word and deed. Specifically, the superintendent must have:

1. an understanding of teacher self-assessment. This person must see a need and purpose for self-directed staff development.
2. an understanding that instructional improvement can be effectively and efficiently accomplished when the teachers are extended freedom and responsibility in improvement of instruction activities.

The superintendent must insure that the self-directed staff development program and leadership structure are periodically evaluated. Without periodic evaluation, the program and personnel will become ineffective and/or stagnant.

Level Two: The Staff Development Director

This person is one of the most important leaders in a district-based self-directed staff development program. The staff development director is responsible for the coordination of faculty training. This individual usually acquires the services of a consultant to train teachers in the strategies of teacher self-assessment or assume the responsibility of training. The staff development director must have a total understanding of the benefits which can be accrued from this type of program and must communicate this to teachers.

In certain instances, the superintendent may assume the responsibility of becoming the staff development director; other schools may hire a full time staff development director. The staff development director reports directly to the superintendent.

Responsibilities of the staff development director include the following:

1. Schedules and coordinates self-directed staff development training sessions and/or conducts self-directed staff development training sessions.
2. Facilitates teachers as they progress through steps of teacher self-assessment. Answers questions and provides materials and equipment necessary for teachers to engage in teacher self-assessment.

3. Identifies and secures services of consultant when necessary to train teachers.
4. Coordinates staff development steering committee activities and designs working conditions for steering committee which allow them input in creating policy and identifying strategies to carry out policy.
5. Creates systematic evaluation measures which assesses program and personnel in staff development hierarchy under the direction of superintendent.

Level Three: The Steering Committee

The steering committee represents an important component in the total leadership hierarchy. These individuals are either elected or selected from the faculty of elementary and secondary teachers. Their expertise should reflect the various subject areas found in the curriculum. The steering committee's purpose is to assist the staff development director and represent faculty interests in the program. These people must be willing to accept responsibility and must possess leadership skills or at least have the potential to develop leadership skills. Responsibilities include:

1. Serve as a sounding board for the total faculty. Solicit input from the faculty concerning the various aspects of the teacher self-assessment program.
2. Assist teachers as they work through the steps of teacher self-assessment.
3. Assist staff development director conceptualize direction of program. Create policy when requested by the staff development director and develop strategies to carry out policy.

Level Four: Building-level Administrators/Partner Teachers/Demonstration Teachers and Consultants.

Building level administrators represent key people in the hierarchy because they are responsible for overseeing the program in their respective buildings. At the building level, the administrator needs to lend a great deal of support to the teachers as they participate in this type of program.

Administrators also need to have a superior knowledge of teacher self-assessment in order to assist teachers when questions arise. Exact responsibilities include:

1. Facilitating teacher activities in the various steps of teacher self-assessment through careful work scheduling.
2. Assisting teachers interpret various aspects of teacher self-assessment when partner teachers are not available.
3. Providing materials for activities which related to improvement of instruction.
4. Serving on the steering committee as a liason for his/her building.
5. Assisting the staff development director with training when requested.

Partner teachers are those teachers selected to work with teachers as the program is being implemented. These teachers are not supervisors, or peer evaluators. These individuals are assigned to selected teachers (one to one). Teacher partner responsibilities include:

1. Reassuring and assisting the teacher as he/she gains confidence in teacher self-assessment strategies.
2. Providing guidance but not dominating in assistance because the ultimate goal is to allow the teacher to become self-directed.
3. Providing insight but not taking self-directed responsibilities away from the teacher; allowing the teacher to learn how to enjoy and use strategies of self-directness.
4. Providing a support system which allows the teacher to feel comfortable and secure with self-directed teacher self-assessment steps.

The partner teacher must have a firm understanding of teacher self-assessment. Ideally, the teacher partner is trained in teacher self-assessment concepts before being assigned or agreeing to work with other teachers undergoing teacher self-assessment training. If this is not possible, teachers who are undergoing teacher self-assessment training can be teamed together. Teacher partners should be selected by the staff development

director and staff development steering committee.

Demonstration teachers are volunteer teachers who make their teaching performances available to teachers who are being trained in teacher self-assessment. The purpose of the demonstration teacher is modeling. Faculty need an opportunity to observe actual classroom teaching or have access to audiotapes or videotapes of master teachers. The modeling of exemplar behaviors is the single purpose of a demonstration teacher. Demonstration teachers serve no other function in the training or assisting of teachers. Demonstration teachers should be selected by the staff development director and staff development steering committee.

Consultants are those experts who have been identified as experts in the field of self-directed staff development. They are identified and hired by the staff development director or superintendent for training purposes. The role and function of these individuals should be determined by the school district before their services are secured. Major responsibilities lie in helping teachers become skilled in teacher self-assessment strategies and directing teaching components of the staff development program.

Once they have trained teachers and have insured that the teacher is competent in teacher self-assessment, the responsibility for assisting and facilitating the teacher shifts to the staff development director, building-level administrator and partner teachers. These leaders have the lion's share of responsibility in assisting the teachers as they progress through the teacher self-assessment program. Building-level administrators, partner teachers, demonstration teachers and consultants report directly to the staff development director.

Level Five: Classroom Teachers

Obviously, the leadership structure is designed to benefit the teacher involved in the program. The program is built on the premise that teachers can and should be given the opportunity to improve instruction in an independent fashion. One of the most important aspects of the program is that teachers are taught how to engage in teacher self-assessment before extending this freedom. Teachers become equipped with a battery of strategies that can be organized to meet their individual needs; they are not left isolated and they are not totally dependent on their own resources.

The leadership structure is organized in a fashion that maximizes the effectiveness of the self-directed approach. As a result, the teacher's professional attitude is critical to the success of the program. The teacher must:

1. have a professional commitment to improvement of instruction.
2. possess openness; have a desire to look at self critically with the anticipation that both positive and negative characteristics will be encountered.
3. have the ability to recognize when and where to seek direction and guidance from building-level administrations, partner teachers, demonstration teachers, consultants and staff development director.

The leadership hierarchy is the basic foundation of a self-directed staff development program. Each level of responsibility found in the leadership hierarchy is aimed at helping teachers become more effective and efficient in self-directedness. Without a support system, teachers are left to their own vulnerabilities. Few teachers are capable of becoming skilled in self-assessment without the guidance and wisdom of others. Those school districts exploring self-directed staff development programs will find this leadership model ideal for maximizing faculty development.

The leadership model can dramatically help teachers who are serious about becoming the best they can be; in turn, these same teachers produce students who become the best they can be.

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